

Alfred Ligon
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INTERPRETING OUR IMPRESSIONS

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PART I

Psychic Experiences and Their Meaning

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A woman states: "I frequently have experiences of a psychic or Cosmic nature, which are very inspiring and thrill me for days, but I would like to be sure that my understanding of their content is correct."

No one likes to be deceived, likewise no one wants to delude himself, so persons are wont, where a conclusion is not apodictical, to have it confirmed by others. We say confirmed, because persons are reluctant to disregard an opinion merely because it does not conform to someone else's. Most empirical experiences that can be had are, in so far as their general circumstances are concerned, perceived uniformly by all men and women and interpreted alike. In the details that are related, however, there may exist a great variation. This variation is due principally to powers of observation, analytical ability, and the control of the faculty of imagination.

A dozen persons, for example, may witness an automobile accident on a main thoroughfare, in which several persons may be severely injured. Even a few minutes after the accident, when these persons are perhaps being interrogated by police officers, their descriptions of the accident would not only vary, but probably be opposed. One may hold that one driver was the cause of the accident, and another person may think the other was responsible. One witness would perhaps say that one car was stationary, others might say that both cars were in motion. A month or six months after the accident, the versions become more extraneous to the actual facts, due to the memory of some of the witnesses. All will agree, however, that an automobile accident occurred and that they were present as witnesses. On the other hand, a psychic experience, in the majority of instances, is one that is had by the individual alone. There are hardly ever any tell-tale evidences of it remaining, that can be examined rationally or studiously, nor would it be advisable to do so.

An experience is anything from a single sensation to a complex group of them, of which the mind is conscious. The foundation of all of our knowledge empirical or internal, exists in consciousness. I do not mean by that that the consciousness is the cause of thought, but rather it is the cause of knowledge, our perceptions, ideas, and concepts. Physical and psychical impressions alike produce sensations, which, in the association areas of our cortex, become our knowledge. Concisely then a psychic experience is the perception by the consciousness of psychical impressions, as contrasted to those which are perceived objectively, or which have an organic origin, such as the sensations of internal fevers, pressures, or pains. A still further distinction must be made. Empirical sensations, those received from without, can be had simultaneously, consisting of a number of separate elements which are not directly related, which are in fact, separate ideas, and the reason subsequently, in a matter of seconds or hours, synthesizes them into one complex conception. For example, we may be passing a bank on the opposite side of the street, when suddenly a man with a small black satchel hurriedly leaves the entrance and bolts into a waiting car. A

few seconds later a loud gong on the front of the building rings, and through the doors of the bank and out into the street rush many people shouting and gesticulating wildly. These are in and by themselves detached incidents and experiences. We actually perceive no direct connection between the man leaving the bank, gong ringing, the people following later, and the shouting. By the process of inductive reasoning, however, from these particular circumstances, we reach the conclusion, drawn from past experiences actually had or acquired through reading, that a bank robbery has been committed.

A psychic experience may be very complex, consist of numerous incidents and actions occurring simultaneously in a logical sequence, as in an empirical experience, but the reason is not obliged to draw conclusions as to the meaning. The meaning of the experience is had by the consciousness as soon as the experience begins. What you perceive psychically merely verifies the concept which you immediately have. To illustrate, it is as though you read a synopsis of a play just as the first act was beginning; thereafter as each character came upon the stage, or as the play progressed, you would understand fully the significance of what was occurring. You would know what the eventual climax would be, and yet watching the performance would make the entire meaning more impressive to you.

We see in this, therefore, no possibility for errors of reasoning. You can no more change the true meaning of the psychic experience, than you could change the story of a play with your reason, after you had seen it enacted, according to the program synopsis. We may, after meditating upon the psychic experience, not like our conception, the meaning given to us. We may personally prefer something else, but we cannot alter one iota the significance given at the time. The meaning is insuperable. If we have an experience during the sleeping state, for example, which is puzzling to us, no matter how forceful it may be in consciousness, no matter how deeply it affects us emotionally, if we are obliged when we awaken to analyze it to make it plausible, to attempt to derive some meaning from it, it is not psychological, but is a subjective phenomenon, such as a dream.

Psychic experiences may be suddenly truncated, as though more could follow, or possibly should, and yet you will, if they are true psychic experiences, have a thorough comprehension of what occurred from the beginning to the conclusion. Such experiences, in all probability, will be extended or continued at a later time. Like chapters in a book, each in and by itself will be complete and cogent. Most persons give too little thought to these distinctions between dreams and superstitious beliefs associated with them, and true psychic experiences. A psychic experience is never terrifying, horrible, dangerous, or injurious. There are various kinds of psychic experiences, of course, which may be considered by this Forum at a future time. Reception of projected thought, telepathic communications, and the result of hyperesthesia are often termed psychic experiences, but actually they really belong to the realm of subjective phenomena, and are not Cosmic in origin. A Cosmic experience may admonish us, even be prophetic of a serious loss, or of the passing of a dear one, and yet it will be

accompanied by that enlightenment of the Cosmic purpose that will fortify us and prevent hysteria, though grief may occur at the time of the actual transition.

An experience, as has already been said, is the consciousness of one or many sensations. They may be auditory, tactile, and visual, or, in fact, may embrace all of the qualities of our physical senses. The same applies to the psychic experiences. We may seem to see the incidents, or we may see, hear, and feel them, or may even psychically taste and smell objects. The experience, however, whether visual or auditory, may be very simple; it may consist of just a symbol or a brilliant golden triangle, or a rosy cross. It need not always be an elaborate one consisting of persons or scenes. It may even be the utterance of a word, a strange word, one never heard or seen before. Nevertheless, concomitant with the experience the meaning of it will arise in the consciousness.

We have practically answered the question, so far, of what these psychic experiences mean. They mean, in other words, whatever significance was communicated to the recipient at the time. This is not an attempt to evade an answer to the question, but it is fact. We have said that people, in not understanding the above principles, are apt to confuse them with dreams. Likewise some persons are superstitiously inclined; they consult dream books, which are printed by the thousands and which sell for from 5¢ to \$5.00, and which are intended for the gullible to read, to find an explanation for their dreams. In such books, an attempt is made to give highly fantastic interpretations of the different kinds of dreams had by people, regardless of who and where they are. The only truth associated with dreams is the physiological and psychological causes of them--they actually augur or portend nothing.

The various differences in the personal evolution of persons, causes each, at various times during his life, to have psychic experiences, each accompanied by a message that is auditory or enacted, and is meant solely for his consciousness. If each person's thumb print is different, as we know it is, is it strange, therefore, that such a faculty as the inner consciousness of an individual should produce still finer differences in each individual? These finer differences account for the personal meanings the individuals derive from their experiences. To the eye, the strings of a musical instrument may look alike, but when they are plucked they produce different notes. Men are strings of a great instrument, upon which the Cosmic plays. The pressure applied on one--or rather the experiences induced in one person's consciousness--will not produce the same concepts in another.

It is dangerous then to try and get someone else to interpret your psychic experiences for you. We say dangerous, because you are apt to become confused if you try to relate your inner understanding of the experiences with the guesses or personal interpretations of another. Some believe that because another may be more psychically advanced than they are that that person is an authority on psychic experiences. Such reasoning is absurd for it is not predicated upon a knowledge of Cosmic principles.

To use an analogy to show how illogical it is, if you have a cutaneous pain, which your consciousness projects to and causes you to realize as being upon the surface of your hand, and which you rub to relieve it, need you ask another, no matter how great a physician he may be, whether you actually feel the pain on the back of your hand, and whether you imagine it exists there?--hardly. You may not know how to rid yourself of it, but you certainly know your personal interpretation of the sensation as a pain is correct, and that you are aware of it in the area which you point out. Then, likewise we say, accept your own interpretation of your psychic experiences, and only your own, the ones which you have while they are occurring, not ideas formed later while going over the experience in your mind, or after comparing it with the opinions of erstwhile authorities on the subject. The person who tells you he can interpret your psychic impression rightly, makes an imposter of himself by that very statement. If, instead, he says: "According to my personal interpretations, if I had the experience I would believe that it meant so-and-so," he is at least honest in his statements, but still the significance he attaches to your experience will never be half as convincing and reassuring as your own, because the Cosmic wanted you to do the interpreting, and not someone else.

The only exception, if it may be called such, to all of the above is what may be termed collective experiences, where a group of people, for a Cosmic reason, will have an experience--a psychic revelation--at the same time, and of the same nature, and consequently each will have the same conception of it. One well versed in Rosicrucianism and in the progress students should make, can tell by the kind of experiences another has whether he is advancing and evolving, but he cannot give, with any assurance, a reliable explanation of the meaning of the student's personal Cosmic experience.

PART II

Determining Cosmic Impressions

Many persons ask questions similar to the following: "How can one distinguish between impressions that arise in one's mind that come directly from the subjective consciousness and those which come from the objective consciousness? In other words, when one receives an impression, how is he to determine whether that impression is born as a virgin thought in the subjective consciousness, or whether it is something that the objective mind had received in the past and has remained in the storehouse of memory until the present? To use an analogy--a man is in a restful, quiet mood, not particularly meditating, but rather in a mood of reverie. He is suddenly seized with an idea. The idea concerns a new chemical formula. Did this idea come from an infinite psychic source, a subconsciousness, or is the idea the result of some previous suggestion, impression, or thought registered on the brain by either one or all of the five objective senses?"

This is rather an intricate question, or rather series of questions, because it concerns alike, psychological and mystical principles.

First, let us make plain that we cannot have any "virgin thought." All of our concepts must be and are composed of the elements of that which is known, and which is the content of our knowledge. If we were suddenly to become aware of--that is, to perceive sensations as an idea--a concept that had no relationship to previous concepts or objects of knowledge, it would not be intelligible to us.

Every idea you have ever had, that is, even if it is a radical departure from anything you actually have experienced, is inherently composed of forms, shapes, things, and colors that are somewhat like something else that you already know. In other words, an idea must be similar to the qualities of the things with which our senses are familiar, or we could not describe it or orient it in our consciousness. An idea we have is new only in that it has not been objectively perceived by us or others in its present form, that is, we have not heard, read, or externally experienced it as we now conceive it.

Things of which we become conscious, even ideas, must be of the nature of that substance of which our consciousness is composed, or we cannot relate them to time, place, or to substance in the universe. Some of the elements of every idea we will have are now inchoate in our storehouse of memory in the subjective mind. As time goes by, we of course add to the modification of these elements, which in turn become elements for our future use. We know that everything we objectively perceive through one or all of the objective senses is segregated into impressions and filed in the association areas of our mind, the bins, if you will, of the storehouse of memory. Each time there is a recurrence of similar experiences by suggestion and by association, these original elements drop out of the "bins" and reassemble themselves into the original experience.

To go back to the analogy, if the man did not know what the term or science of chemistry was, or if he had never seen the symbols used in chemistry to denote nature's elements and the compounds of them, he would not know that he had received the impression of a chemical formula while in reverie. This indicates that what he received, and which was new to him was the formula, not that of which it was composed.

When we try to reason a problem to a conclusion, we are utilizing our will forcefully to draw from memory the experiences had and to relate them to impressions in our objective consciousness, to attain the desired end. It is like an individual who wants to enter one room from another through a narrow door and take with him several pieces of furniture. He may try first and find that the furniture seems too bulky. Then he may go to a shelf to look in a book to see whether there are any experiences recorded there which will tell him how to nest the furniture properly so that it will pass through the door freely. Looking in the book is equivalent to trying to recall past useful experiences from memory. After considerable effort and placing the furniture in various arrangements, possibly following a suggestion he may have read in the book, he succeeds in moving all of it into the next room. Such a procedure is a crude analogy of the process of reasoning, using

impressions in the objective consciousness as objects of knowledge, and receiving from memory others as well.

At times, as we all know, we may struggle with a problem, applying to it syllogistical reasoning, and yet the desired combinations of the elements of thought are never satisfactorily arrived at. In such instances, objectively we seem to fail. We may, just before falling asleep and while in that borderline state where the objective and subjective consciousnesses are about equal, suggest the whole problem to the subjective consciousness, and then dismiss it in its entirety from our outer mind. The next morning, or perhaps the next day when we again think of the problem, the solution may flash into the objective consciousness in vivid detail. When this occurs, the solution, as it often is, may appear so simple that we are amazed, if not just a little chagrined, that we did not arrive at it in our previous deliberate cogitation.

How is this accomplished? The subjective consciousness is far more proximate to the Divine Mind which constitutes complete knowledge than is the objective mind. The elements which we have suggested to it, and in fact implanted in our subjective mind just before falling asleep, are there assembled by the Divine intelligence in their proper order. When we again think of the problem the elements are released in a complete and desired order, which is a solution of the problem to the objective mind.

The above is an experience that I am quite certain is not uncommon to many persons, and there is nothing strange or mysterious about it. We do not always succeed because sometimes what we are working with as a problem is Cosmically impossible. This may be known or unknown to us at the time. It may involve the misuse of Cosmic and natural laws, therefore, there cannot be any successful solution to it. For example, we cannot speculate that the moon is composed of green cheese, and try to support this absurdity in our reasoning, and failing to do so, implant the problem in the subjective mind and expect that it will become an actuality which later will be released to us in a logical form.

However, aside from this psychological process, there are higher Cosmic principles which we must understand, and the results of which come to us as intuitive knowledge. The analogy given above is of that kind. The man was in a reverie, in a reflective state, yet not thinking about anything relative to the chemical formula which flashed into his objective consciousness. It was not the result of having struggled with a problem and having suggested it to his subjective mind where it was finally worked out and returned to him objectively. Whether we realize it or not, many times we make ourselves channels for such Cosmic impressions, or intuitive knowledge, not alone by our kind of thinking, but the idealism which we maintain. We often unwittingly prepare ourselves to become an instrument to be used by the Cosmic to serve humanity.

Allow me to state how this is accomplished. A man may have studied chemistry in high school or in college. It may have interested him as a hobby as well. Yet he is not a professional chemist, nor does he

seek to earn his livelihood by such profession. He is, however, and this is important, sufficiently acquainted with the science to recognize its symbols and to read a formula. He has never set about to engross himself with any of its serious research problems or to apply it to any urgent industrial need.

Perhaps one day while walking through the slums in his city, he is moved by the darkness and dinginess of the homes, and the fact that they are devoid of some of the health-giving rays which emanate from the sun, and which freely enter the homes in the more prosperous districts of the city. To rebuild many blocks of these homes would be a terrific expense to the community, as would be the installation of lighting elements which radiate the necessary energy artificially. Perhaps he surmises, while moved deeply within by the plight of the people, that somehow, some day a chemical substance can be painted upon the walls of the rooms which will be energized by merely switching on an ordinary electric lamp; that is, when an ordinary lamp is switched on the light from the lamp will cause the wall substance to become irradiant with its health-giving rays. He has not the slightest conception of how this may be brought about chemically, nor does he undertake the solution of such a problem. The whole idea, the wish for such an achievement, was motivated by his intense sympathy and desire to help the unfortunate people.

Perhaps almost immediately after leaving the district, he dismisses the idea, I repeat, without once dwelling upon its technical aspects. Some night, months later, or maybe even years later, (and if fundamentally his character and comportment remain on the same plane of sympathetic understanding) while alone in his study, stretched out in his favorite chair before a fire, with a sense of well being and of peace, seemingly from nowhere suddenly enters his consciousness a chemical formula, which is associated with an idea that greatly helps the distressed people whom he had seen years before.

The Cosmic had selected him to provide the way and the means of aiding those persons. It had intentionally organized in his subjective mind the objective knowledge which he had already had into a useful, complete idea, to fulfill a motive which was born out of the finer impulses of his psychic self. The Cosmic had merely arranged the formula in his objective mind, like an invisible hand reaching over the shoulder of a chess player and properly setting a play on the board before him.

The Cosmic has often given man intuitive knowledge in a manner even more indirect than this. To use the same analogy, the man might have had a knowledge of chemistry, as we said. He also might have visited some poverty-stricken district and had compassion for the people and wished he knew how he could help them, but he might not have had the slightest idea of how it could be accomplished. Later, the Cosmic might have given him intuitively not only the formula for the special fluorescent paint with its health-giving qualities, but the idea as well.

Why would the Cosmic delay several months or years before giving this intuitive knowledge? Upon this, of course, we can only speculate. We

may surmise that it is to allow the individual more worldly experience, or to give him a further intellectual background so that he would be able to grasp the magnitude of the intuitive knowledge when he received it. Then again perhaps to ascertain the stability of his character in the interim, to put him through tests which would determine whether he would become acrimonious toward his fellow beings, or continue his love for them under all circumstances.

How may we tell if such ideas are Cosmic impressions direct, that is, intuitive knowledge, or if they are merely rearrangement in our subjective minds of that upon which we had first mentally labored with reason. I believe I have already answered this. If we have reasoned upon the content of the idea, then it is a subjective process when its solution comes to us. If we have never gone into the nature of the subject, never dwelt upon it, or never reasoned about it, then it is intuitive knowledge, the whole idea and the structure being of Cosmic origin. Only the elements, the concepts of which it is composed, or the material knowledge with which it is integrated are of the mortal mind.

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